

Chapter 4: Eve of Destruction

- Adding to the campaign hysteria created by the Democratic Party was an article published by Alex Manly, editor of the *Daily Record*, the city's only African American newspaper. The article sought to counter claims by whites regarding interracial sexual relationships. Manly's article was used repeatedly by Democrats as a tool to further anger whites.
- Republicans, locally and statewide, sought to alleviate the problems to no avail. Delegations traveled to Raleigh and Washington to meet with Governor Daniel L. Russell and President William McKinley in order to inform them about the stresses created by the Democratic white supremacy campaign. Russell bargained with Wilmington Democrats, and the Republicans did not mount a slate of candidates in return for promises by Democrats that violence would be averted on election day.
- Some African Americans in Wilmington sought to assist in efforts to calm tensions whereas others inadvertently assisted Democrats by forcefully reacting to white antagonism and threats.
- Despite threats of being fired or physically harmed for registering to vote, many African Americans sought to exercise their voting rights, resulting in increased efforts by the Democrats to intimidate black voters.
- Although many white men in the city had guns, no widespread violence broke out on election day, and Democrats won with wide majorities. A minor scuffle occurred at a majority African American Republican precinct while votes were being tallied. During the scuffle, the ballot boxes were stuffed to ensure white victory.
- The day after the election, whites held a meeting in which a series of resolutions were passed requiring Alex Manly leave the city and cease printing his paper. Additional resolutions called for the resignation of the mayor and chief of police. Meeting attendees selected a Committee of Twenty-five to be led by Alfred Waddell to implement a set of resolutions called the White Declaration of Independence.
- The Committee of Twenty-Five summoned leading black politicians and business leaders—the Committee of Colored Citizens (CCC)—to meet on the evening of November 9 and placed their demands in the hands of the city's African American community. The CCC prepared a response and sought to implement means to prevent violence. The response was to be delivered on the morning of November 10 by 7:30 A.M.
- Despite electoral returns favoring Democrats and the general conclusion by some leading members of the party that the worst was over, many whites were still on edge. They anxiously awaited the tenth bolstered by a block system of patrols and paramilitary organization of armed men already in place.